

Samson
A
VVEDDING-RING.

FITTED TO THE FINGER
OF EVERY PAIRE THAT HAVE
OR SHALL MEETE IN THE
FEARE OF GOD:

OR,
THAT DIVINE CIRCLE OF
HEAVENLY LOVE, WHEREIN
man and wife should walke all their dayes.

THE POSIE WHEREOF IS AN
expression of *A good Husbands Kindnesse*
towards his vertuous wife, with her
retaliacion of like affection.



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VEDDING-RING

SET TO THE FINGER
OF EVERY PAIR THAT HAVE

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To my worthy and much honoured friends, Master *William Hackwill* Esquire, one of his Maiesties Iustices of Peace for the Countie of Buckingham, with his truly vertuous and religious Bedfellow, Mistris *Elizabeth Hackwill*, the dew of Heauen, and fatnesse of the Earth, Grace and Peace bee multiplied in Iesus Christ.

VOrshipfull, and right dearely beloued: I haue often sought opportunitie to salute you ioyntly; acknowledging my selfe your debtor many wayes, & which is more; vnable to satisfie any: it was the grieve of Darius, that he should die indebted to his friend, which departing he bewayled, as his last, not his least mis-hap, hauing receiued a courtesie, hee should not liue to requite it: if such an ac-

The Epistle

knowledge may not goe in part of payment, I might despaire; having receiued many from you, both while I liued neere you, as since my remouall at your motion, into these parts (distance of place hath not stopt the current of affection, nor absence begot obliuion) and yet find my selfe able to doe no more: onely this is my comfort, Good-will hath not beene wanting; if abilitie answered desire, you should find me as readie to pay, as to confesse: I would not faigne a debt; to encrease it, the propertie of insinuating flatterie; neither would I denie it, where it is due, the guise of seruile basenesse; iudging it better thus to publish my owne pouertie, then to be censured as vngratefull, or of my friends forgetfull.

Preaching at
the Marriage
of Mr. Iohn
Kenne.

Occasion lately directed my meditations vpon this subiect: wherein the mutuall happinesse of your choyce, did often present it selfe vnto my thoughts; the matter and manner of handling;

(If the testimonie of an experient friend
may

Dedicatorie.

may be thought impartiall) applying it selfe
most fully & fitly to you both; that I could not
forbeare to impart it as a messenger of thank-
fulnesse, no worke of worth; except you bee
pleased by acceptation, to make it worth per-
using: here you may read your selues, and
be stir'd vp to blesse God, the maker of
Marriages, for his good prouidence in your
meeting; here you may see that Wedding-
ring, which you both put on, in conceit and
resolution, at the Marriage-day; that Di-
uine Circle or heauenly round of heartie re-
flecting-loue, wherein you doe, and all mar-
ried persons should moue during life; to ac-
count of their owne vertuous mates, as ex-
celling others; am I deceiued? or experience
hath taught mee what I haue written: no
more: neither may I speake; what I haue
seene and obserued, of your happinesse in
this kind: liue long more happy; it is law-
full to pray, as Ioab for Dauid: The Lord ^{2. Sam. 24. 3.}
your God adde vnto it an hundred-fold,
that your eyes may see it: the Lord increase

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

*your content daily, and double the portion
of the saving graces of his Spirit upon
you both: otherwise I cannot steed you;
prayers you shall not want, while I re-
maine.*

From my studie in Barstaple,
January 1. 1630.

W. CROMPTON.



A.
WEDDING-RING:
FITTED TO THE FINGER
of euery Paire, that haue
or shall meete in the seare
of God.

PROVERBS 31. 29.

Many daughters haue done vertuously, but thou excellest them all.



From the tenth verse of this
Chapter to the end thereof,
(*Reuerend*, right Worshipfull
and all dearly beloued,)
you haue, and at leasure may
read, an *Artificiall* Wed-
ding-song; or a diuine Hymn;
describing and commending

Marriage with vertuous women: pen'd or appointed,
as may be probably conceiued, to be said or
sung at *solemne* meetings.; especially vpon such
occasions; euery verse begins with a letter of the
Hebrew Alphabet, in order from the beginning to
the end: composed much after the maner of those

Psalmes

A Wedding-ring.

Psalm 110. 1. 2.

122. 123.

124. 125. &c.

Psalmes of degrees with *Rhetoricall* gradations: partly they might be more sweetly vttered; either in parts by many, or altogether by one, to the greater content of the speaker, profit of the hearer, and delight of both; partly the matter therein contained, might be with more ease remembered, and longer retained.

Cant. 3. 14.

In it selfe, it is a Prophecie, containing much good counsell, therefore called, (if I mistake not) *The Crowne of Solomon*: good Counsell to a King, respectiuelly, about the choyce of a wife, is as his *Crowne*, or the Crowne of his Crowne, for the consolation of all true hearted subiects and preservation of the publike-weale.

Prou. 12. 4.

Goe forth, O ye Daughters of *Zion*, and behold *King Solomon*, with the *Crowne*, wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladnesse of his heart: that Crowne I take to be this Prophecie; wherein, as out of a sparkling Diamond, you may see the reflecting image of true beauty, and read both the worke and worth of a good woman: and fitly may it be called a Crowne: euery wife thus qualified, is a Crowne to her husband, saith *Solomon* elsewhere; her vertues & graces are as so many Rubies or glittering Pearles of great price, which doe well become and adorne a Crowne: Goe forth therefore, O ye Daughters of *Zion*, and behold *Solomon* with his Crowne, whereon we find this Posie ingrauen as with a pen of iron, in letters

A Wedding-ring.

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ters of gold, neuer to be forgotten.

The price of a vertuous woman is farre above Rubies.

Take notice first of her fidelity: the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her; free from those boisterous stormes of icalousie, and distracting cares about house-hold affaires, whereby others are tost day and night, he rests himselfe in quiet repose, like a shippe at *Anchor* in the calme harbour, knowing his wife will answere her trust, being neuer idle, nor ill employed. Verses 11, 12

Secondly, of her industry, shee seeketh wooll, and flaxe, and worketh willingly; delays not, till materialls inuite her, but sends & seekes; her thoughts preuent occasion; her hands and eyes contend with time, she doth those things freely, which others may doe, constrained through feare or necessity. Verse 13.

Thirdly, of her vigilancy, she rises while it is yet night; diligence expels drowinesse, and teaches good wiues to remoue darknesse by an artificiall Sunne, that the goodnesse of God in the approaching light, may be opportunely met (not meritoriously matcht) with some good worke of theirs: weakenesse I know tyes many, but sloth more, too long in bed; *laxie* humours are best purged by early rising. Verse 15.

Fourthly, of her charity: she stretcheth forth her hands to the poore and needy; like some pleasant riuer she feeds and clothes the neighbouring. Verse 19.

B

bouring

bouring valleies, which through the heat of cruelty, or the cold of povertry, were ready to pine away; hungry bellies and naked armes are the subiect of her meditation, it is not enough others know her to be good, except they feele it; helpfull compassion is a marke of true deuotion while she feeds or clothes her body with rich dainties, she is obserued to sigh and say, What abundance doe Leniōy, when many a good soule wants necessities? her fulnesse yeelds no satisfaction, vnlesse it ouerflow by communication.

Veget. 21. 32.
33. 34.

Fiftly, of her prouidence in gouerning her little Kingdome; like a well ordered Army, euery one furnisht, hath his place of employment assigned; Lawes enacted; houres of examination appointed; & lest she should erre in iudgement, she lookes well to the wayes of her house-hold, her eyes are in euery corner: children learning, seruants labouring, all obedient to the becke of her hand and eye, such soueraignety shines in the face of vertue: she giues maidens a portion; their laciish fingers may not be their owne caruers, who care as little in the spending, as they did in getting their Masters estate; she clothes her family with scarlet, the lasting weed of deserued honour; implying what shee is, and deserues to haue: makes her selfe carpers of tapestry; the furniture of her house and table is the fruit of her hands, made, not bought; ornaments in a Family are commendable Emblemes of pious industry, as more vsfull things; God allowing not onely to sustaine,

A Wedding-ring

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sustaine, but to delight Nature: she keepes her husband euer in that decent fashion of attyre, which becomes his age and calling, so that he is specially noted when he sits in the gates, amongst the chiefe of the Land: no paines about him is grieuous to her, for whose sake all the rest are chearefully vndertaken.

Sixthly, of her wisdom and discretion; in Verse 16.
speech she openeth her mouth with wisdom, her words are few, seasonable and weighty: attyre, not curious nor carelesse, but such as the time allows in modest & graue Matrons: strength and honour are her clothing: & for behauiour; in her tongue is the law of kindnesse, she prouokes none to euill thoughts by lightnes; neither sends any from her discontented, through sowre, fullen, and heauy sadnes; her carriage is so sweetly tempered with modesty and humility, that at once she cheares the vertuous and curbs the vicious minded.

Lastly, her piety, she feares the Lord, which is Verse 30.
a corner stone in this building, the foundation of all; what good she doth, is in obedience vnto God; and will be constant in doing, till the Lord leaue commanding; but of this I haue spoken enough already, vpon another occasion, in explaining the two last verses of this Chapter. Who hath or can finde such a vertuous woman? her selfe is portion enough, she passes her waight in gold: her dwelling is a representation of heauen; *O happy man*, and therefore happy, because husband to such a wife, who brings ioyfull con-

*Vide The last
ring Jewells*

tent to his heart, delight to his eyes, glory to his head, and helps him keepe a continual feast. *Adam* might haue had a garden, no *Paradise* without *Eue*; man is imperfect without a wife, unhappy without a good one; what the heavens haue bin thought to be about him, and his soule within him, that a vertuous wife is indeed about him, like well-tuned Virginals, her life is perfect Musick: no harsh sounds, nor iarring strings on her brest: if she intreat, it is with humility; if she complaine, it is with teares; if she chide, it is with smiles: how can she displease, whose harmlesse thoughts are still intent to please? he hath put off nature, that finds no content in such a Turtle: not to acknowledge such a helper, argues want of grace: let him seeke her that wants one, let him mourne that hath lost one, let him praise her that enioyes one; so much is implied in the Text. *Her husband* also he praises her, saying,

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

The words are a conclusive branch of the Prophecie; a speech of praise delivered in the person of an experienced husband, and grounded vpon obseruation:

Deuiding themſelues into $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{A Commendation,} \\ \text{-and} \\ \text{A Compariſon.} \end{array} \right.$

Commendation

Commendation of vertuous daughters, with their number: Many daughters haue done ver-
tuously.

Comparison, wherein one so qualified is preferred to all, But thou excellest them all.

Daughters carry their duty in their name: the word in the Originall springs from a root, which signifies, A building, or to build; and may yeeld vs a twofold instruction.

בנות

A rad. ce.

בנה

A. edificare.

First, that euery vertuous daughter is a building: and therefore in the creation of woman, it is said, that the Lord built her of the ribbe; as men vse to doe stately houses, faire, strong, and well-seated, for their delight and profit; without which they cannot well be. What *Tisaphernes* Lieutenant to the Persian King spake once of *Alcybiades*, comparing him to a faire house of pleasure; is truly verified of a vertuous daughter; she is a building both delightfull and fruitfull. Compared for stateliness and profit, to a Merchants ship, *Prov.* 31. 14. Now in all buildings, we may obserue cost, comeliness, and vse; no lesse in vertuous daughters: comely they are to the eye, many wayes beneficiall, and they want no cost; will spare none, if else none should be spared for their good: they are the Lords building, like *Ierusalem*, a house that is compact together at unity in it selfe: nor like the dropping house, mentioned in the *Proverbs*, but like our Saviours house built vpon a rocke; which proues a con-

Gen. 2. 2.

Plut. in vit.

Alcybiades.

See the Prophets prayer

Psal. 144. 12

Psa. 122. 3.

Pro. 19. 1.

27. 15.

Math. 7. 24.

stant defence for the owner, against the boisterous winds of violent assaults, and the scorching *Sun-shine* of alluring temptations, for outward structure of severall parts in order, for inward furniture, gifts and graces of the mind, admirable: observe and see, the foundation, turrets, windows, doores, inner-chambers, all hanged with richiewels of intellectuall vertues, and divine graces, and you will say, This onely deserves the name of *None such*: no building to the sight so pleasant, none for use so profitable, as this living, moving, speaking Tabernacle: I might stay you over-long in the Entry; should I stand to vnuaille the whole Fabricke: you may admire the rest by what you see a farre off, I dare but point to it, and passe away: excellency in any workmanship, calles for an exact or no description; lest fruitlesse haste should eclipse the praise and glory of the Workeman.

Secondly, every vertuous daughter is, and must be, a builder; we have seene what she is, idle she may not be, her name implies such action, as tends to perfection: a builder she is, first, to her decayed parents, by vpholding the credit of an ancient family, by renewing and continuing their name, and nature with posterity, & by repairing the breach, age hath made in the ruinous houses of their bodies, with a timely supply of all their wants; a vertuous daughter makes old parents begin to live young againe, partly by feeling present comforts, and partly by seeing

Spirabile Caelum.

Bedin. li. 12. c. 4.

Pro. 23. 22.

ding vpon hopes of future happinesse.

Secondly, she is a builder together with her husband, as copartner, yoke-fellow, and helpe Gen. 2. 18. meete for him, in the worke committed to their trust; if one should build, and the other pull downe, we might expect a Babel, no prosperous building; but *Solomon* tels vs, euery wife Pro. 14. 1. woman builds her house, the foolish onely plucke it downe with their hands; and that was the reason his building in the later end, went so backwardly forward, hauing so many vicious daughters about him: a good woman raises vp the ruines of decayed places, studying how to preserue her husbands credit and good name, both in regard of God and men; when the contrary, makes the stateliest turrets stoup, through pride, O domus antiqua quam dispari domino dominari? ryot and idlenesse, dismantling ancient monuments of strength, to bury her husbands honour in the rubbish thereof: the dwelling of one is like the pleasant spring, euen in the midst of Winter, fresh, gay, and pleasant: the house of the other, like stormy Winter, in the middle of May, torne, ragged, and ill-fauoured: I went Pro. 24. 30. by the field of the slothfull, and loe; it was all growne ouer with thornes, and nettles, and the stone wall thereof was broken downe.

Thirdly, she is a builder in regard of her children, instrumentally to give them being, and well-being, both for conception, birth, and education, by her industrious care, tender infants Education of children is the foundation of the Commonwealth. at first, like vnto the creeping luy on the wall,

come

come to betall and goodly Cedar in Libanon, profitable pieces to vnderprop a declining state; whoseuer knowes, hath seene or heard of this labour, that it is to beare and bring vp children, will say, that she is a painefull builder: her *man-sew* pangs before, & sleepelesse nights after the birth, when variety of change cannot alter, nor giue content to her tearelesse cryer; one while she sits and sings, to deceiue or flatter the tediousnesse of time, with counterfeited mirth; anon she sighs and weepes, (the burden of her song,) and sings againe, as if variety did ease, though not remoue her griefe, all which doe sufficiently tell vs, her building in this kind, is multiplyed sorrow.

Gen. 3.16.

Eccle. 7.1.

Pro. 22.1.

Fourthly, she is a builder to her selfe, of a good name, which is a rare monument, better then precious oymment, rather to be sought then great riches, no shining titles of fading glory so famous, no glittering trophies of ancient Worthies so durable; as this building: a vertuous daughter cannot be obscured, no more then a City built on a hill, Fame borrowing the tongues of strangers to publish her desert: every action speakes of her, and euen while she sleepest, the building goes forward.

Fifthly, she is a builder in regard of her neighbours, either by confection of salues, distillation of waters, or preparation of other necessities for their reliefe, supply, and succour in time of need: a vertuous daughter is a true neighbour, eucry

euery one neere her is the better for her; Innocency beares such sway in her, and is so powerfully preualent, that she cannot thinke of an injury with delight, either to doe it to another, or to reuenge it, done to her selfe by others; neither will her habituall goodnesse suffer her to be a carelesse helper; when Satan hath sowne the seeds of strife and discord, and stir'd vp men by diuision, to weaken themselues with their owne hands, she sleeps not, till those tares be pluckt vp, and peace and loue replanted in their affections.

Sixtly, she is a builder, in regard of the Church and Common-weale, though she may not publickly be seene, in her retiring roomes, she helps forward the building by prayers, teares, aduice, and the labour of her hands: like the wise hearted-women vnder the Law, who are commended by the Lord himselfe, as builders, euery one preparing & bringing something towards the finishing of the Tabernacle: let not women be discouraged, because they are not called to publicke offices, vertuous daughters want not employment, neither are they excluded, (as some vnwisely-ambitious, haue repiningly-murmured,) from this honourable seruice, by their private diligence in pious exercises, the Magistrate rules, the Minister teaches, the husband-man labours, the Physician cures, the Lawyer pleades, and the Souldier fights the better: let them not thinke themselves therefore contemned, or that they can doe nothing, because they doe not euery thing, God

Exod. 35. 25.

*Familia prudentis instituta
civitatis imago,
Bodin, l. 1. c. 2.*

Right ordering of a Family, is a branch of regal discipline.

C

hath

hath wisely disposed of his creatures into severall ranks, as an expert Captaine doth his Army, allotting every one such and so many talents, as his place required; be content with your portion, the lot is fallen out vnto you in a good ground.

And so you see the subiect of this commendation, *A daughter*.

She is a delectable building; onely let her be mindefull, that she weary not her Lord, with quer much needlesse reparation: she must avoid fantastike fashions, curious gaudinesse, with all vaine superficiall trimmings; such painted paper-houses please children onely, but cannot withstand a storme, and are iustly derided by every vnderstanding passenger.

She is a conscionable builder; let her remember, she be not idle, nor sluggish in her labour, but like the spinning-Spider, or the gathering-Bee, let her daily bring some honey to the haue: & in this commendation of a daughter, we haue three things commended to our obseruation.

First, the necessity and benefit of History, to record the vertuous deeds of such daughters: the phrase here vsed implies so much; presupposing a Catalogue of names, laid before the Pen-man of this Prophecie, (*Many daughters*): History vnto memory, is as a good wife vnto her husband, a helpe meet for him; in regard of truth, both the mother, and nurce thereof, if the disposer be a man experient in the affaires he treats of, iudicious and impartiall; it is a faithfull trusty

trusty Councillour of state, by whose aduice and direction a Common-weale may be framed, gouerned, reformed and preserved; an Army ordered, enemies vanquish'd, victory obtained: wee read of *Lucius Lucullus* appointed Capitaine Generall ouer the *Romane* Forces against *Mithridates*, hauing no experience or knowledge in warre, more then he had gotten by reading History, and yet proued a discreet & valiant Commander, vanquishing at that time, two of the greatest *Eastern* Princes. It is and may be the directour of meekest men in any of their actions; wherein they may see without danger, how others haue behaved themselues vpon seuerall occasions, and what hath followed: speculative experience yeelds the cheapest wisdom.

It is a punisher of vice, presenting aged folly, greene and fresh to posterity, not suffering sinne to dye, much lesse to bee buried in oblivion: the name of the wicked shall rot, saith *Solomon*, that is, the euill saueur of their filthy life, shall be conueyed through History to generations vnborne: it is a delusion of Satan, to thinke otherwise, sinne cannot be concealed: vnder not on sinne, vpon a presumption of trespasse; birds of the ayre shall cary the voyce, *Eccle. 10. 3.* and what which hath wings, shall tell the matter: many pennes are employed this way, silently to obserue and note humane passages, that secret workes or darkenesse, contriued in cloiest corners, may be publisht hereafter on the house tops.

men blinded with the glistering out-sides of Satans Iesuies *pleasure and profit*, cannot see into private Studies, (the vnwilling prisons of rich Records,) nor thinke of that which will disgrace them in the ages to come.

It is a rewarde of vertue, the proper end of History, to reserue worthy deeds, for imitation; a good worke, though it dye in doing, is a reward to it selfe, yet that some dull natures might be stirred vp the more, and all benefited by seeing gracious steps before them: this onely is exempted by a firme Decree from the stroake of death, to liue in History, vertues preseruatine, against the deuouring graue, encouraging many to doe well, that they may heare well; to doe worthily in *Epiratah*, that they may be famous in *Bethlehem*: Trumpets are for glozing votaries, who study rather to seeme, then to be good; let them hunt after applaule, who know they deserue not to haue it brought home vnto them: be silently constant in good courses, commit your wayes vnto the Lord, trust in him, and he shall bring it to passe; retired vertue yet neuer lost her praise.

But to retume: the History here meant, especially is Gods owne Booke, wherein we find the names of many vertuous daughters, as of *Sarah*, *Deborah*, *Hannah*, *Abigail*, *Ester*, *Judith*, *Mary*, *Martina*, *Lydia*, &c. That of our Saviour is most remarkable, enioyning the vse of History, to preserue the memory of a good woman, *Verily I say vnto you, where soeuer this Gospell shall be preached, thoroughout all the*

Ruth 4. 11.

Math. 6. 2.

Ps. 37. 5.

1. Pet. 4. 6.

Judges 5.

1. Sam. 1. 25.

Math. 26. 13.

the world, there also shall this that she hath done, be spoken of, for a memoriall of her: Hence it is that humane Histories in imitation of diuine, haue beene so carefull to present these iewels to posterity, lest any vertuous daughter should be forgotten: onely this I find, men generally too sparing in praise of good women: seeing the Lord hath done it, men may proceed from a certainty of the lawfulnessse, to a necessity, his relatiue actions are for example, and to haue a binding power, saying to vs as our *Sauour* did to the man in the Gospell, *Luke 10. 37.* *Goe and doe like wise:* it is a custome as commendable as ancient, at funerals, to mention those vertues most eminent in the parties deceased; whofoeuer buries vertue in silence, or stubbers ouer worth in any by a carelesse stile, commits a threefold injury; one against God the Donor, whose praise and glory is hindered; another against the persons in whom it was, robd thereby of some part of their right; and a third against all suruiuing followers, who should be encouraged by such iustice, to wr. stele with vice, that so at last, they might goe home adorned with this Crowne of honour. let none enuy the dead; by negligence to enroule good women amongst this number of many.

Secondly we haue here the manner how he commends her, not before he had giuen others their due praise: detraction from others, is no solid ground, for the commendation of our owne; we may not steale from our neighbours, to enrich

Luke 18. 14.

*Quisquis amat
dictis abscentum
rodere vitam.*

*Hanc men-
sam indignam
nouerit esse sibi.
Aug.*

Prou. 31. 30.
11. 4. 23. 5.
14.

our selues, or those we loue, with goods or good name, nor dispraise others, to augment our owne prail: it was an inuiours practice of the proud Pharise, I am not as other men are, extortioners, vniust, adulerers, nor as this Publican: building his owne perfection vpon the weakenesse of his brother, concluding himselfe (proudly) good, becaule not so sensibly bad; sound, becaule not so apprehensiuely sicke as others: it is a cold kind of prail, that is drawne from the vices of any, a deceitfull demonstration, taken from the worser part: The relation of imperfections, is meat to feed malice onely, fitter it is to bewaile them in secret, then to publishe them with delight for any end, table-salke in any places, is too much faulty this way; it were good Caloes rule might be obserued; either good of men absent, or nothing at all: so in matters of commendation keepe this method, obserue and see amongst the multitude if many be religious, vertuous, industrious, giue them first their due, then may you preferre your owne: good order obserued in doing, beautifies the action, and commends the workeman.

Thirdly, we haue here the matter of his commendation: it is not said, Many daughters haue beene beautifull; fau-ur is deceitfull, and beauty is vanity: nor, Many daughters haue beene rich: house and riches are the inheritance of Fathers, which profit not in the day of wrath, but make themselves wings, and fly away as an Eagle: neither is it said here, that many daughters haue beene

beene, and are borne of high parentage, it may be a benefit, no praise vnto women to come of great kinred; a good old stocke may nourish a fruitlesse branch, a Noble family yeeld and impious progeny; the commendation runnes not of riches, beauty, or birth, (though these be commendable in their place and ranke,) but of vertue.

*Qui genus la-
et suum, alie-
na laudat Sen.*

Many daughters haue done vertuously.

Teaching vs this lesson, *That vertue onely wins women true praise, and wiues deserued commendation*: we find *Sarah* commended for obedience, *Rebekah*, for wisdom, *Rachel*, for plyant loue; sweetly-winning, and firmly-holding affability towards her husband; *Abigail*, for a good vnderstanding, and *Ruth*, for vertue in generall: the Spirit of God moues the hard question, not of a rich or beautifull, but, Who can find a vertuous woman? Men may easily find faire women wantons, rich women proud, and surely, great women idle and impious, more then comly or lawfull: more difficult to find a vertuous woman, chaste, humble, obedient, discreet, feareing God, whose sweet composure of her selfe in all places and company, stirs vp in the beholders an admiring affection; let him say, and thinke he is rich enough, her prize is farre aboue Rubies, no pinching pouerty could euer lodge with such a Pearle: let him say, and thinke, he hath found fauour with God, a prudent wife is from the

*1. Sam. 25. 3.
Ruth. 3. 11.*

*Iob 12. 15, 16.
17. 19.*

*PROV. 18. 22,
19. 14.*

Lord,

Lord, who must be prayed vnto before, and daily praised after: vertue is amiable, wherefoeuer found, but most of all in women; the weaknesse of their sexe, addes a kind of strength and luster to their graces: vertue from beauty, euen in men is most attractiue, but in women, we find it hath a power strangely coactiue, causing not onely the good, but the worst of men to honour it: vertue hath had this priuiledge in all ages, beauty may please the eye for a time, as an obiekt ouer-delightfull to vnregenerate nature, but by the presence of any of deaths messengers, it is put to flight, not daring to receiue a thought of death, much lesse the sight; riches may serue to gild ouer many imperfections in women, and make them seeme louely, which neuer were, while passion guides reason, and the sensuall appetite vsurps authority to sway the will, against the voyce of iudgement: the flesh will be satisfied with either of these, the mind fully contented with neither: both are momentary & mutable, insufficient to make women honorable; that is vertues prerogatiue Royall: honour is a vertue, and will be imployed about nothing but vertue; nor stick to any thing but what is immortall, free from change, as vertue is; were there ten thousand ages, attended with as many diseases, which should come tumbling like *Iobs* messengers, one in the necke of another, yet vertue like some impregnable Castle, would still flourish, out-facing the stormes of age, sicknesse, death, and the graue:

graue: the more vertue suffers; the brighter it is, the longer it liues; the younger it growes; increasing by the communication; the oftner scene and vied; the lesse feared to be lost; theeuers cannot steale; nor time deface it: who can find a vertuous woman?

*Virg. Eccl. vultu
re vultu.*

Lest any hasty to answer, should be mistaken; either in estimation of themselves; affection to; or commendation of others; let vs enquire what it is to doe vertuously.

It is no ordinary act of common ciuility; (as many in their conceits are mistaken;) but an habituall practice of something more then morality: none can doe vertuously; without a habit of vertue; one action yeelds no denomination; and whosoever hath the habit of any one in deed and in truth, must of necessity haue the rest in some degree; vertues, (excepting the intellectuall only, which haue no such dependance nor connexion among themselves,) are linkt as in a chaine together; if you be owners of one, the rest will follow.

*Augu. Epi. 29.
Hieron.
Aqui. 1. 2. q.
65. art. 1.*

To this practice of vertue; there are three sorts of vertues requisite: all hauing, and keeping both their place and time, in a vertuous daughter, the eminency of some aboue others; breakes not the harmony: the first are intellectuall, and those either speculatiue, as knowledge to discerne, wisdom to direct, and vnderstanding to chuse, according to both: or practicall, as prudence which is actiue in electing, and Art, which is operative

in performing the election, according to the rules of vertue. The second sort are vertues morall, such are Providence, or skill to giue good and wholesome counsell, when occasion is offered; to order all her affaires by the rule of right reason, to their proper ends, for the benefit of humane societies: Iustice, by an vpright diuision, to giue to euery one their owne portion: Temperance, consisting in a discret limitation of passion and affection, about words, dyet, apparell, and pleasure, that the fleshy part ouer-sway not reason: Fortitude and well-guided magnanimity, not against, but in defence of her husband, his person, goods, and good name, boldly to resist all euill motions and temptations, with a constant opposition of carnall lusts, which fight against the soule.

The third sort, are vertues Theologicall, such are those precious graces of Faith to apprehend, Hope, to hold fast, and Loue to glew her to the mysticall body of Christ; So that an vnderstanding, sober, godly woman, is the vertuous daughter here meant, to be iudicious, industrious, religious, in act & exercise, is to doe vertuously; many daughters haue been so, many haue done so, and this is matter of commendation.

Men may esteeme thus of vertuous daughters in generall; it is not sufficient in a husband, without some speciall application: his owne, if she strue to doe her best, and be in any tolerable measure so qualified, must be preferd in his conceit,

ceit, as most vertuous and best for him; such direction we haue from the comparison, which is my second part, and comes in the next place to be discoust; Though many daughters haue done vertuously, yet *Thou excellest them all*.

A Commendation, it is something beyond comparison; to excell any, yeelds matter of praise alwayes; to excell and passe all, affords matter of admiration; which shewes the power of true affection, to change in respect of it selfe, the nature of things, and to produce effects aboue reason: a hearty Louer can neuer be a sound Grammarian; Grammarians acknowledge and make vse of three degrees of comparison; a true Louer admits no positiuie, all his comparisons are superlatiue; he thinkes none so vertuous, none so fit for him, as his owne portion; and it is better, seeing the case thus stands, that all Grammarians should be angry with vs, then one God offended by vs: whose will it is, as we see here, that one should be preferred to all. *Thou excellest all*: Delivered not absolutely, in regard of any one here meant, and pointed out in the Text, (though some might coniecturally appropriate it, to *Bathsheba*, or to the blessed Virgin *Mary*,) neither is it to be vnderstood, as meant, or spoken of any, out of pride, vaine glory, flattery or a boasting humour, (it is vnlawfull for men so to praise or preferre their owne,) but respectfully, with due limitations, and so applyable to any: as first, in regard of qualification, such a one answering

A good woman must be singular in good.

Phil. a ver. 10.
ad finem.

the description prefixt, is preferd to all that doe not, and are not so.

Secondly, in regard of the husbands speciall notice and knowledge, many have done vertuously; but thou in my iudgement and apprehension excellest.

Thirdly, in respect of his affection and liking, amongst many, none appeare to him so vertuous.

Fourthly, in respect of his contentation with the endowments of his yokefellow, he is best pleased with her endeavours.

Fifthly, in regard of his resolution, vpon the former grounds, forsaking all, to cleave vnto her, aboue all others; whosoever meets with a vertuous Daughter, thus qualified, is bound in conscience to thinke and say, *To me thou excellest all.*

רחץ
Aradue.
רחץ
Scandere.
Ascendere.

The word signifies to ascend by climbing: as men in the field of warre doe aspire after honour, so women in the calme schoole of vertue, doe strive to goe higher, degree by degree, step after step; yeelding vs many lessons worth our obseruation.

Phil. 3. 13. 14.

First, that every verruous Daughter is humbly high-minded and holily ambitious after the best things; climbing to ascend, that they may excell in every good worke: the *Apostle* doth elegantly expresse it of himselfe, which I may here apply vnto them; they count not themselves to haue apprehended, but this one thing they doe, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching

thing forth vnto those things which are before; they presse towards the marke, for the price of the high calling of God, in *Christ Iesus*: it is the property of a disposition basely seruill, alwayes to looke downewards, and to thinke it selfe high enough, before there be any beginning to ascend; whence it comes to passe, that many conclude they can doe nothing, because they dare not patiently thinke of the difficulcy of doing, iudging sinfull sluggishnesse, to be contented humiliry; when noble spirits aspire daily after high and difficile things inoffensiuely.

Secondly, that the way of vertue is the way to honour and preferment, in the loue of God, and opinion of good men: in *Rome* there was no coming to the Temple of honour, but by, and thorow the Temple of vertue: though it be narrow, yet it is an infallible way: whosoever climbs in by the windowes, as into the Church, so vnto honour, is a theefe and a robber; by treading vpon the pins of an vnlawfull ladder, men and women may ascend, not excell; either by the mist of deserued censure, they are couered, and so not regarded, or else through the suddainesse of a shamefull fall, they haue no leisure to embrace their seeming happines; when vertue aduancing any, like the radiant Sunne expels all cloudes, and makes them shine in the fulnesse of strength; obserue and see, whether such as went in any other path, did euer finally prosper? When women rise by falling, men by sawning and flattery,

Prou. II. 16.

Iohn 10. 1.

paying money, in stead of practising vertue, the higher they goe, the farther will their infamy fly abroad; onely vertue leades to true honour.

Thirdly, that vertuous daughters having once begun, neuer leave good and godly courses, till they haue perfected their vertues by action: she that lookes backe, is not fit for the Kingdome of heauen; remember *Lots* wife: it is a miserable thing to haue beene happy; when that may be verified of them which the *Apostle* speakes of his *Galatians*; Yee did run well: yee were vertuous, chaste, sober, religious: *But, &c.* Goodnesse is discerned and commended by continuance; either resolute to goe on, or begin not; climbing is painefull, yet men vsually desist not; till they attaine the top, and end of their desires; especially if their aime be at such fruits, flowres, & shewes, as are in this eminent Garden of vertue; good women are no lesse valiant, with vnwearied patience, to vndergoe the heat of the day, knowing they shall not be deprived of their hope; their labour cannot be vaine in the Lord: perseuerance vnto death, brings a Crowne of life.

Gal. 5. 7.

1. Cor. 15. vlt.
Rev. 2. 10.

Fourthly, that such vertuous women must not want encouragement by commendation: giue them the fruit of their hands, let their owne works praise them in the gates; *Many daughters haue done vertuously, &c.* There was a feast ordained and kept in *Rome*, called, *Matronalia*, in honour of those women, which procured a peace betweene the *Sabines* and the *Romanes*; with diuers priuiledges annexed

Plut. vii, Rom.

annexed vnto it, as to giue them place in all publicke assemblies, to speake no dishonest words, nor doe any vnseemely thing before them; it is a sin to be silent in their praise, that deserue it, provided it be done iustly, seasonably, & discreetly: I would not wish men to dawbe ouer rotten posts with deceitfull colours, to burden vicious women (their owne wiues,) with vnderdeserued praises; nothing more foolish and ridiculous: I would not haue men make their wiues, though good and vertuous, the ordinary subiect of their talke, in all places and company; no custome more vnseemely, if not dangerous; but when conuenient occasion is offered, to speake the truth of them, for the glory of God, manifestation of their comfort, and excitation of others, by such good example.

Fistly, that vnderstanding husbands, are best pleased with the vertuous actions of their owne partners: many haue done vertuously, but thou to me, in my eye and iudgement excellest all; A duty I confesse, easier to thinke, and speake of, then to performe: an impure, adulterous heart, thinks directly the contrary, that any mans wife his better then is owne; Satan casts many rubs in the way, shewing men through a deceitfull glasse, and laying, see, and obserue in such a one, handsonnesse, beauty, wit, diligence, farre excellling thine; enioy her at least in desire; and preuailing passion, yeelding to this temptation, blinds iudgement; so that many there are,
who

who haue and doe deeme their owne choise worst of all, nothing pleases, that passes from them, no, not when it is the same, which they approve and admire in others: therefore the vnderstanding must be conuinc't, the heart seasoned with grace, the eye emptied of adultery, and the mind freed from the restless motion, and perturbation following desire of change, before any can say truly of his owne vertuous second, *Thou excellest all.*

Pro. 5. 15, 16,
17, 19.

Take *Solemons* counsell, drinke waters out of thine owne Cisterne, and running waters out of thine owne Well, let thy Fountaine be blessed, and reioyce with the wife of thy youth, let her be as the louing Hind, and pleasant Roe, let her brest satisfie thee at all times, and be thou rauisht alwayes with her loue, giue affection leave here to extend her selfe something beyond truth, either there is no way to erre, or no danger in erring this way.

To wind vp both, the Commendation, and Comparifon on one bottome; I shall conclude all with the time, in certaine specialties, by way of application.

The whole may serue to informe vs, first, that men should be experienst, able to discerne good from euill, vertuous from vicious women, before they make choise of a wife, that men so soon as they are married, should be able to commend good wiues, is exprest in the Text; that they should be as able to condemne the euill and vicious, is necessarily implied; none can commend a good

a good one, but he that knowes a bad; and can discern thorow the vaile of hypocrisie & maske of dissimulation, lest one be mistaken for the other, vertue vnderuallwed, and vice approued; such euents are common, where experience is wanting: hence it is, many marry they know not what, and may amend their choise; they know not when: When *Cesar* was to passe *Rubicon* against *Pompey*, he left the land with this resolution, as I remember,

That a man could be undone but once;

As it is in the gouernment of a Common weale, or in the ordering of an Army, a Commander can erre but once, (which is a miserable happiness,) ouerthrow and ruine following so close, he cannot haue leisure to be twice faulty. So oftentimes it falls out in the choyce of a wife, men haue not leaue to change often, one blest or crost, euer so, during life: it is a practice dangerous & intolerable in a well-gouerned *State*, to force an vnion betweene young yeeres, where there is no actuall power to chuse, nor iudgement to discern; common reason tells vs, we should be long in doing that, which can but once be done, lest after we vainely wish it were to doe againe: bead-wised; it is a long bargaine, rash adventures yeeld little gaine.

Secondly, we are further informed, that vertue is the chiefeest flowre in *A good wifes garden*: for this she is commended, preferred for this; riches, beauty,

Math. 7. 16.

Ephes. 5. 26,
27, 28.

Plut. vit. Lycurg.

beauty, parentage, fauour, and proportion grow in lower rankes, and serue to adorne the borders; the heart is vertues place; which shoues it selfe to be aliue, by the present fruits of vertuous actions; none haue chosen well, who haue preferred any thing to this, in their choyce: looke first on beauty, and you buy a Picture; looke first on riches, and you make a purchase; looke first on parentage, & you match with a multitude at one time; but looke first on vertue, and it is a marriage indeed, two made one by a mysticall vnion, representing that betweene *Christ* and his Church: the Law may tye two together, that meet vpon sinister ends, vertue onely vnites them; therefore this is most excellent and praise-worthy; all other flowres dye in Winter; this flourishes most in old age; others droue vnder the stormy blasts of hoary *Autumne*, while this enioyes a perpetuall Spring.

Thirdly, we are hence informed that wiues should therefore strue to excell one another in vertue chiefly: *Lycurgus* made the *Lacedemonians* equall in liuings and riches: his reason was, that they might strue to excell one another in vertue onely: I seeke not such a Law; supposing equality of desire this way, may well stand with inequality of condition: the excellency of riches and pouerty consisting in this ability, through a vertuous disposition, to make a right vse of either; we see many contend for superiority in place, who shall

shall stand, sit and goe before, we may obserue women strive with their neighbours, who shall excell in decking and trimming their bodies, adorning and setting forth their houses, following new fashions, and out-stripping one another in excessive feasting: euident signes of great lightnesse, to wrestle about, or deeme themselues the better, for any of these trifles: emulation onely in the race of vertue, is worth commendation; Couet earnestly after the best things, saith the *1. Cor. 13. vlt.* Apostle, Who shall be most rich in grace; most zealous and forward in good duties; who shall excell most in the vertues of humility, temperance, chastity, modesty, prouidence, charity, &c. such couetousnesse is commendable, such contention the issue of sinlesse-ambition: let all care giue place to this, all strife be turned into this, how you may excell one another in vertue, so shall loue regaine her ancient soueraignety amongst neighbours, in spite of enuy.

Fourthly, we may hence learne, that married persons should consider the actions one of another in the best sence; to say, and thinke, (if it be true in any tolerable manner,) their owne choyce excels all others: and that first, in token of their submission to Gods disposition, who ordaines meet matches, allotting to euery body his owne ribbe; secondly, to manifest their contentation with their portion, when they can say heartily, their lot is fallen out vnto them in a good ground;

E 2

thirdly,

thirdly, for a testimony of the truth of their affection each to other; it is one property of loue, to couera multitude of infirmities, and sometimes to iudge that excellent, which is but weakely good; wives passing by their husbands faults, husbands pardoning their wives failings, that so a good opinion may be still kept warme in the lap of mutuall affection.

First, the husband must thus thinke of his wife, and leasonably expresse it, for a comfort to her against all her paines and trouble in child-birth, and family affaires, as also to encourage her continuance.

Though many daughters haue bene vertuous, yet none so fit for me, thou excellest all.

And to that end it is required she be, first, religious, a profess seruant of Christ, going and drawing others with her in the way to heauen; for how can such be said to excell amongst men, who are so farre from this spirituall exercise, of climbing Jacobs Ladder; that they neuer yet lookt vp towards heauen, with any serued purpose to goe thither? vnder this I comprize piety, charity, & sobriety, in words, food rayment, pleasure, &c. secondly, that she be officious, a builde together with her husband; readie and willing, both in regard of earth and heauen, body and soule; vnder this, she is enioyned to be louing, obedient, helpfull in all good things, to the utmost of her power; Let such a husband so inricht,

Inricht, remember to be thankfull vnto God, who hath done more for him then parents, his purse, or all the world could doe; good seruants are a blessing, good children a greater, but a good wife best of all.

Some may reply here, and demand, How can we say, as you teach, without sinne, when we see and feele the contrary? I answer, first, it may be so, many daughters haue beene vicious, yours worst of all; naturally women are waue-^{Dub. 143. 243. impos.}ring, weake, vnwise, light, credulous, newes-louers, giuen to lies: Many haue beene and are irreligious, enemies to profession in the powet thereof; Many are giuen to pride, idlenesse, wantonnesse, drunkennesse; witnesse those conceited conditionall Lawes, attributed to *Zaleucus the Locrian*, restraining women, that none should be attended with more then one maid in the street, except when she was drunke; that none should goe out of the City in the night, except she went to commit adultery; and that none should weare gold or embroddred apparell, except when she purposed to manifest herselfe to be a common strumpet.

Many are giuen to lying, swearing, cursing, brawling, and fighting, like devils incarnate, (such ribbes are *Satan's* shaftes, taken from the sides, to be shot against the heart of man to vex him, and to be as rottennesse in his bones) and yours it may be for want of grace, are worst

of all: of such neuer thinke nor say, that they excell in vertue, it is no part of the Doctrine here taught, but the contrary, women must doe things praise-worthy, that will be praised.

Secondly, blame your owne choyce, beauty, or riches was the Starre that ledde you, how could you escape shippe-wracks? you sought not for a vertuous mate, no maruell if you found her not: but she was once better: take heede then; some vntoward behauiour in you, may occasion those vnruely passions in her: a wife is like a shippe, well-steered, she goes smooth, if otherwayes, she be guided by an vn-skilfull hand, she turnes and tumbles would make one sicke to see her: how-euer, know it is a burden laid on you by the Lord, to chastise your former folly, trye your patience, or to exercise your skill.

Thirdly, suppose many failings in your wiues, yet if there be a will to doe well, (a wise man may easily discerne betweene habituall wickednesse, and intermissione frailties,) deale with them as you would God should deale with you.

Accept the will

For the deeds

Suffering, is the way to victory: to yeeld vnto them in some things, is a meane to make

make them more obedient in all.

Secondly, the wife must haue the same conceit of her husband, else the Ring goes not round. Though many sonnes haue done vertuously, thou to me excellest them all: and to that end, hee must bee, first, iudicious, a man of vnderstanding, able to manage the affaires of his generall, and particular calling; vnder this I containe wisdom, knowledge, experience, sobriety, Christian care, to provide for his charge, &c. want of discretion accidentally begets contempe. 1. Pet. 3. 7.

Secondly, he must be courteous in his behaviour towards her, (a churlish *Nabal* can hardly be brought within the compasse of this round,) good words, and lookes, giue women great content, especially from those they loue: I would not haue men so soft and sillie, as to be displeased with nothing, neither to be so hot, and hasty, as to bee angry with euery thing; there is a golden meane: and vnder this I place patience, bouny, familiarity, like that of *Isack* with *Rebekah*, encouragement Gen. 26. 8. in good and defence of her person, and name against all others: Let such a wife so enrich, remember to pay the debt shee owes vnto God, of praise and thanks; is not such a husband better vnto her then ten soulders? 1. S. m. 1. 8.

But alas, I am so matcht as neuer woman was, many husbands haue bene vicious, mine

mine worst of all: I answer, First, it may be so in your conceit onely, want of affection with desire of change, may mislead iudgement: Secondly, say it be so indeed, hee runnes a broad, frequents Tavernes and Ale-houses, mis-pends his time and meanes in gaming, &c. take heede you bee no cause thereof; Many are so light-heeled, and nimble-tongued, their husbands haue no delight to stay within. Thirdly, how-euer it be, prayers and teares will proue your best weapons, with a patient expectation of his reformation, knowing it to be the iust hand of God, for your youthfull wantonnesse and neglect of his seruice: the best counsell I know to giue you, is,

*Please him, and
Pray for him.*

Lastly, be you all aduised, if married, to examine your condition for a perfect vnion is attended with this opinion, if vnmarried, resolute to march with none, except you bee thus perswaded of them: resist Satans suggestions, all carnall motions, whereby many vntoward marriages are made amongst vs, that you may wear out this conceit each of other as your

Wedding-ring.

The benefits following, which may moue
you

you to put it on, are many. First, all harsh conceits are hereby prevented or removed, what is done or spoken, shall be well taken; one weyghing still the workes of the other, in the ballance of good-will, either finds note, or freely pardons the want of weight.

Secondly, no strife can be raised betweene you, which is not soone appeased; passion and suspition may preuaile so farre, as to darken, but shall neuer live so long, as to put out the eye of affection: their iarres are attended with words, (none offended cannot long be silent,) words beget lookes, and lookes are followed with smiles, so the storme is layd.

Thirdly, good example is given, to children, seruants, neighbours, and to the Church of God: O, how pleasant a thing is it, to see man and wife to spend their dayes in perfect amiry: one bearing, the other forbearing, both studying to giue content: so that other may see that happinesse which they cannot attaine, and be drinen to admiration, though not to imitation.

Fourthly, hearty loue shall be maintained and increased daily, so that you will neuer desire to change, hearts nor hands, with any other; the longer you liue, the more louing you will be, such vertue there is in this *wedding-ring*: pray you may find it, endeavour to weare it, resolute to liue and dye with it, that men may alter fixe it as

an Bishop from your tombes, to be some addition
of all wish iust applaus.

I send wish prayer for you both: the Lord guide
you with his Spirit, season your hearts with his
grace, and make you truly vertuous; that as *Naah*
and *Rebekah*, *Israh* and *Rahel*, you may build up
the house of your fathers, live peaceably, and
dye comfortably, thus so this which hath bene
spoken for you on the day of your meeting, may
be verified of you, after the day of your parting.

Many sons and daughters have done vertuou-
ly, but you have endeavoured to excell them all.

To God the Father, God the Sonne, and God
the holy Ghost, be given all honour and glory,
now and for ever.

Soli Deo gloria.

FINIS.

